



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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What We Can Do

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Community- and faith-based organizations, employers, healthcare systems and providers, public health agencies, policy makers, and others all have a part in helping to promote fair access to health. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, we must work together to ensure that people have resources to maintain and manage their physical and mental health, including easy access to information, affordable testing, and medical care. We need programs and practices that fit the communities where people live, learn, work, play, and worship.

Working Together

The COVID-19 pandemic may change some of the ways we connect and support each other. As individuals and communities respond to COVID-19 recommendations and circumstances (e.g., school closings, workplace closures, social distancing), there are often unintended challenges for important aspects of emotional well-being such as social connectedness and social support. Shared faith, family, and cultural bonds are common sources of social support. Finding ways to maintain support and connection, even when physically apart, can empower and encourage individuals and communities to [protect themselves](#), [care for those who become sick](#), [keep kids healthy](#), and [better cope with stress](#).

Community and faith-based organizations can

- Review and put into practice [CDC's guidance](#). This includes promoting preventive measures such as social distancing, use of cloth face coverings, frequent handwashing, and staying home when appropriate.
- Share COVID-19 prevention [information](#) with communities using ways you know are effective to connect with community members.
- Work with trusted local media (such as local or community newspapers, radio, TV, etc.) to share information in formats and languages suitable for diverse audiences.
- Connect people to healthcare providers and resources to help them get the treatment and medicines they may need.
- Hire people from the community to share COVID-19 prevention messages and link people to resources and free or low-cost services, including testing.
- Reach out to the local public health department to offer to be a community testing site, provide a platform for information-sharing, or share community insights.
- Work with others to connect people with goods (e.g., healthy foods and temporary housing) and services to meet their physical, spiritual, and mental health needs.

Employers can

- Review and put into practice [CDC's guidance for businesses and employers](#), reminding managers to ensure that best practices are followed.

- Maintain flexible leave policies. Allow employees who are sick or who must care for others to stay home without fear of being fired or other punitive actions. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave days and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.
- Allow employees to use sick leave and return from sick leave without a doctor's note or a COVID-19 test.
- Provide employees with COVID-19 prevention messages and trainings that are tailored to employees' languages, literacy levels, and cultures.
- Provide cloth face coverings, hand sanitizers, handwashing stations, and personal protective equipment as appropriate.
- Establish fair policies and practices for all employees to [maintain physical distance between each other and customers, as possible](#).
- Train employees at all levels of the organization to identify and interrupt all forms of discrimination; provide them with training in [implicit bias](#)  .

Healthcare delivery systems can

- Ensure that chronic disease management and services to prevent illnesses are maintained and accessible. Provide patient supports (e.g., reminders, self-care management programs).
- Increase availability and accessibility of COVID-19 testing for racial and ethnic minority populations and other populations that are disproportionately affected.
- Work with [community health workers/promotores](#)  , healthcare providers, and patient navigators to [connect community members](#)  with health resources.
- Increase engagement with trusted community and faith-based organizations and institutions that have relationships with local communities.
- Provide [telehealth](#) options that are tailored to the needs of patients.
- Ensure providers show [awareness of and respect](#)  for [culture](#)  when providing COVID-19 testing and care.
- Train employees at all levels of the organization to identify and interrupt all forms of discrimination; provide them with [training](#)  in [implicit bias](#)  .
- Increase language access and help adapt public health guidance to local circumstances so that health information and recommendations reach the people who need it the most.

Public health agencies can

- Build partnerships with tribes, scientific researchers, professional organizations, racial and ethnic minority-serving organizations, community organizations, and community members to share information and collaborate to prevent COVID-19 in communities.
- Provide [information](#) through channels and in formats and languages suitable for diverse audiences, including people with disabilities, limited English proficiency, low literacy, or people who face other challenges accessing information.
- Help people understand what [contact tracing](#) is, why public health workers need to find people who have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19, and what successful contact tracing requires.
- Address misunderstandings about why people are being asked for personal information, and why this information is important for stopping spread of COVID-19 among family, friends, and communities.
- Form partnerships with and invest in partners who can promote fair access to health by
 - Ensuring that community diversity is considered in contact tracing efforts
 - Establishing accessible testing sites for COVID-19

- Helping community members get what they need to isolate if they are sick or have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19
- Helping community members get information and resources to keep themselves and their loved ones safe and well
- Learn about what [other communities](#) are doing.

State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial governments can

- Provide access to locations such as hotels for self-quarantine and isolation, considering cultural factors when identifying and offering locations.
- Explore options to provide free or low-cost [broadband Internet access](#)  so people can use [telehealth](#) and get information on COVID-19 and social services.
- Explore options to protect renters from evictions.
- Work to expand childcare service options.
- Increase public transportation services (e.g., run buses or trains more often to reduce crowding, free access to city bike programs).

What CDC Is Doing

- Providing assistance to public health agencies and others to expand testing, contact tracing, isolation options, and medical care to reach groups at increased risk for getting COVID-19 and having severe illness.
- Facilitating partnerships between public health agencies, tribes, scientific researchers, professional organizations, community organizations, and community members to share information and collaborate to prevent COVID-19 in racial and ethnic minority communities.
- Offering technical assistance to local communities with COVID-19 outbreaks in areas with disproportionate impact on workplaces that employ low wage workers (e.g., meat processing plants, agriculture, nursing homes).
- Supporting essential and frontline workers to prevent spread of COVID-19 in critical workplaces, learning more about their concerns and challenges and offering solutions to address them.
- Developing guidance to implement programs and practices that are in different languages and are culturally tailored to diverse populations.
- Continuing to build an inclusive public health workforce equipped to understand and meet the unique needs of an increasingly diverse population.
- Continuing to collect [data](#) to assess and track disparities related to COVID-19, working to expand completeness of the data, and developing new ways of communicating data to the public and other stakeholders.

Learn more about [CDC's work to promote health equity](#) in the COVID-19 response.

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)